

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

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CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 24-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates: Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 146

May 15, 1959

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BRIEF NOTES:

Annual Church School Meet

This annual event began on Sunday May 3, with a Sunday School pupils rally at Seibi Gakuen in Yokohama to which 1,600 pupils came. The lecture and group-study program for church school teachers, carried out on May 4, brought together 280 teachers who discussed the specifications and problems for effective use of the new curriculum. On the evening of May 4, a public lecture meeting was held at the Yokohama Music Hall, with an attendance of over one thousand. The meeting was addressed by President Matsushita of St. Paul's University and Mrs. Taki Fujita, former representative of Japan to the UNO commission on women's affairs. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors for elections was held concurrently with the "Taikai". The Rev. Takihiko Yamakita was elected Chairman, Mr. Saburo Matsuno, Vice-chairman and the Rev. Shogoro Ushimaru, Secretary.

A statement was issued in the name of those gathered at the Yokohama assembly. It refers to the difficulties encountered by mission and the endeavor to increase the church, acknowledges with penitence the lack of growth and vitality, but also recognizes the earnest and self-sacrificing spirit of our predecessors whose efforts have borne fruit; also, it said, we should not overlook the influence the Christian Church has had in the national culture. We should face the new century earnestly and with renewed confidence to make the Gospel more widely understood and its influence on the nation stronger. This is the challenge to Christian education, as it works hand in hand with all evangelical efforts.

E. Stanley Jones Ends Sixth Evangelistic Effort

The evangelistic team of Dr. Thomas Carruth and Mrs. Mary Webster, headed by Dr. E. Stanley Jones, concluded its effort in Japan on April 2. From its beginning on February 5, a total of 40 cities were visited and more than 134 meetings were held. One of the special points of this visit of Dr. Jones to Japan was a series of six ashrams which were held to re-focus individual attention to dedication in prayer life, especially designed to lead the Japanese church into a thorough-going prayer life. Those who attended these ashrams expressed gratitude for the fellowship and guidance received at the meetings. Dr. Carruth also introduced a prayer group movement which has become wide-spread in the Methodist church U.S.A., and this group has pledged support and interest to word the life of the Japanese church.

Through the influence of these two efforts it is already evident that prayer life has been re-inforced within the church. Recently, local ashrams were held, adopting the method introduced by Dr. Jones. In Tokyo, April 28-29, four churches combined to hold an Ashram at Hakusan church. Also, church officers and leaders of Omiamae Church held an ashram. The National Council of Churches and the General Evangelistic Committee of the Kyodan have emphasized the need for and the part of thorough and satisfying prayer life as one of the purposes of the centennial evangelistic movement.

As the sixth evangelistic visit of E. Stanley Jones to post-war Japan, the Japanese church attributed its particular success to the team efforts of the visiting evangelists. Many towns were visited for the first time, and the members were often welcomed by non-Christian governors or mayors, among whom were some who are related to the MRA. Perhaps the most notable effect of the movement is evident in the decisions for Christ -- while in the former crusades a majority of the decision cards were signed by those who were re-dedicating themselves, in the present one, more than one-half of the 17,000 decisions were made by non-Christians, professing their desire to become a Christian.

Evangelical Lutheran Churches' Annual Meeting

Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Japan held their thirty-sixth annual meeting in Tokyo from May 5 to 7. Representatives and delegates numbering 200 chose Dr. Chitose Kishi, president of the Lutheran Seminary, as the new president. A new member church, the Lutheran mission from Denmark which is conducting work among the Buddhists in Kyoto, was welcomed as a member.

Among its deliberations, the question of union among Lutheran churches was given special attention. Another problem which was singled out was the attitude of the Japanese government toward religious groups. In spite of the constitutional provision that all religious legal persons shall be treated equally, receiving protection for worship and activity but no government aid, several recent events were noted which evidenced special aid to particular religious groups -- for example, aid in reconstructing or re-inforcing worship at particular temples. These acts the government has construed as "cultural aid, but Christian groups especially have protested that they are religious aid." Therefore, it was urged that the government recognize those temples as religious spheres and that in keeping with the constitutional provision, politics and religious activities should be strictly separated.

Japanese Bible Society Host to Convention

The Japanese Bible Society was host to a Bible Society Convention Tokyo, May 1-8. Unexpected cancellations reduced the number of delegates but present were Mr. O. Beguin and Mr. K. G. McMillan, Switzerland, General secretaries of the United Bible Societies; Mr. D. Lancashire, Hongkong, General secretary; and Mr. W. Grossbeck, the Philippines, General Secretary. The first day included addresses by Dr. Murata ("The Translation of the Bible in Japan"); Mr. Junichiro Sako literary critic ("Japanese Culture and the Bible"), and the Rev. Kiyoshi Hirai ("Present-day Protestant Christianity in Japan.") On the following day, visits were made to the printing shop and bindery to see Bible production methods in Japan, and each delegate preached at several churches the third day. Bible distribution problems in Japan and Philippines were discussed on the fourth day, and public lectures were held: Mr. Beguin spoke on "The Bible in Africa and Europe" and Mr. McMillan on "World Evangelism and the Bible." On the final two days, the guests were taken on a tour to Kyoto and Osaka for sight-seeing and for explanation of religions of Japan.

IEF NOTES:

After more than six months preparations, Dr. Bob Pierce of World Vision and a large team of associates have come to Japan. Beginning on May 12, a three weeks campaign was opened in the Osaka festival hall in operation with Osaka laymen.

The Rev. Kentaro Buma, associated with the Japan Church World Service for 6 years, has been appointed general secretary of Japan Church World Service. He succeeds the Rev. Hallam Shorrock, who has been named general secretary in Korea. Present at the Board of Trustees meeting on May 1 which took this action was Dr. Norris Wilson, General Secretary of the American CWS, at present visiting Japan for several weeks. The Rev. Mr. Buma is a graduate of Doshisha Law School and Yale Divinity School. He is assistant pastor of the Nakameguro Church, Tokyo.

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Among the current recipients of scholarships awarded through the Interboard Christian Committee are two who have already left Japan for study abroad. Mr. Asao Hasegawa will study at the School of Sacred Music, Union Seminary, New York City. He holds a B.A. from International Christian University and was a student of Tokyo University of Arts for two years. For three years he served as the organist and choir director at I.C.U., and also lectured in music. His father is a professor of law at Aoyama Gakuin, Tokyo.

Dr. Keijiro Suruga, who received his degree in medicine and Ph.D. in surgery from Tokyo University, is chief surgeon in the San Ikukai Hospital, Tokyo. Among his published works is a book on neonatal surgery. He left Japan on April 25 and has already begun his study of surgery for infants at Pittsburgh University. As opportunity permits, will also visit other medical centers.

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In the election of governors and mayors in Japan, April 30, among the successful candidates for governors were two Christians. In Fukuoka-Ken, a strong hold of the labor movement (mining), Mr. Taichi Uzaki, 54 years old, son of the deceased Methodist Bishop Kogoro Uzaki, was elected governor. A graduate of the Tokyo University agricultural department and a long-time government official, he is a member of the Socialist party.

In Ibaraki-Ken, Mr. Iwakami, 45 years old, a member of the Church of Christ, was chosen as governor. A former high school principal, he is a graduate of the Kyoto University Law School. In his campaign he particularly gained wide-spread support from the rural areas. Both Governor Uzaki and Governor Iwakami are active Christians in their local areas.

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Miss Katherine Johnson, Secretary of the Interboard Committee for Christian Work in Japan, New York, has resigned because of illness and is now convalescing in Florida. Dr. John DeMaagd of Japan is replacing her during his furlough in the United States.

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